

Message Text

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ACTION FBOE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 A-01 /011 W

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R 010410Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1096

UNCLAS MUSCAT 508

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ABLD, AFSP, MU

SUBJECT: NEED FOR ADDITIONAL OFFICE SPACE

REF: MUSCAT 188; MUSCAT A-20; MUSCAT 465, AUG 22, 1974

1. EMBASSY HAS URGENT, LONG-STANDING NEED FOR ADDITIONAL OFFICE SPACE AS REPORTED REF MESSAGES. AT PRESENT, SINGLE 210 SQ. FOOT OFFICE OCCUPIED BY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, BFO AND B&F ASSISTANT (WHO, AS CLASS B CASHIER, TECHNICALLY SHOULD BE IN ISOLATED OFFICE). USABLE SPACE IN CHANCERY IS SUCH THAT VISITORS MUST TRANSIT ECON/COMMERCIAL OFFICER'S OFFICE TO REACH THAT OF CONSUL. THIS IS MUTUALLY INCONVENIENT AND ESPECIALLY UNSATISFACTORY AS OFFICES AFFECTED ARE PRINCIPAL ONES INVOLVED IN TRANSACTING BUSINESS WITH PUBLIC.

2. OVER LAST SEVERAL MONTHS WE HAVE EXPLORED WITH LANDLORD POSSIBILITY OF BUILDING ADDITIONAL OFFICE SPACE ON OR ADJACENT TO PREMISES. PROBLEMS INVOLVED INCLUDES QUESTION OF LAND OWNERSHIP, MUNICIPALITY APPROVAL OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, AND FACT THAT COMPETENT CONTRACTORS ARE SO BUSY WITH MAJOR CONSTRUCTION THAT THEY HAVE LITTLE INTEREST IN TAKING ON SUCH A SMALL PROJECT. ALSO, LANDLORD'S INTEREST IN THIS HAS BEEN LUKEWARM. EVEN IF THESE PROBLEMS WERE OVERCOME, AND PRESUMING THAT LANDLORD--AND THEN DEPARTMENT--WOULD AGREE TO PLAN, IT WOULD BE SEVERAL MONTHS OR EVEN 1976 BEFORE ADDITIONAL SPACE WOULD BE READY FOR OCCUPANCY. AT THIS TENTATIVE STAGE, NO COST ESTIMATES OBTAINED, BUT BASED ON LOCAL PRICES, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE EXPENSE IN NEIGHBORHOOD OF \$50,000 (TO BE AMORTIZED OVER REMAINING THREE-YEAR LEASE

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THROUGH RENTAL INCREASE).

3. LAST WEEK WE LOCATED GROUND FLOOR, TWO-BEDROOM APARTMENT IN BUILDING CLOSE TO EMBASSY (APPROXIMATELY 100 YARDS AWAY). LAYOUT LENDS ITSELF TO EASY CONVERSION TO THREE OFFICES PLUS SMALL STORAGE SPACE. PRESENT (BRITISH EMBASSY) LEASE EXPIRES MAY 10. WE COULD ACQUIRE APARTMENT AT THAT TIME UNDER TWO-YEAR LEASE WITH OPTION TO RENEW FOR TWO ADDITIONAL ONE-YEAR PERIODS ON SAME TERMS. MONTHLY RENTAL WOULD BE RIAL OMANI 350 (\$1,023.39), PAYABLE TWO YEARS IN ADVANCE.

4. EMBASSY REALIZES CONTINUING FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS UNDER WHICH BUREAU OPERATING AND APOLOGIZES FOR UNFORESEEN REQUEST BASED ON THIS SUDDEN OPPORTUNITY. AT SAME TIME, WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THIS IS EXCELLENT AND MOST ECONOMIC SOLUTION TO ACUTE SPACE PROBLEM. AS ALWAYS IN MUSCAT, TERMS ARE STIFF, BUT IN THIS SELLER'S MARKET LANDLORD WILL HAVE NO PROBLEM IN FINDING LEASEE ON HIS TERMS.

5. ACCORDINGLY, IN ORDER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS RARE OPPORTUNITY, UNLIKELY TO REPEAT ITSELF, REQUEST DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL OF THIS LEASE AND CONCURRENT INCREASE IN POST ALLOTMENT OF \$25,375 TO COVER FIRST TWO YEARS' RENT (\$24,561.40) PLUS COSTS FOR SETTING UP NEW OFFICES OF \$813.60.

6. BECAUSE OF MAY 10 EXPIRATION OF CURRENT LEASE, REQUEST EARLY REPLY.
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